

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

FORENSIC MEMORIES.

LATER LEAVES: Being the Further Reminiscences of Montagu Williams, Q. C. Two pp. xv. 42s. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

This new volume of the reminiscences of Mr. Montagu Williams, the eminent Queen's Counsel, and at present a London magistrate, will be heartily welcomed by all who had the pleasure of reading his former volumes. Mr. Williams makes no literary pretensions, but his mind is stored with strange and interesting recollections, and he is an excellent "raconteur," telling his stories in a clear, straightforward, and simple way which brings out all their points. Few men have had a more varied experience, moreover, for, beginning with the most extensive criminal practice of his time, Mr. Williams developed powers so unusual that his services were called in regularly in nearly every important case, financial, commercial and otherwise; and thus he has been associated with perhaps a larger number of "causes célèbres" than any other man of his generation. The present volume was, as he states, first intended to be merely a record of his magisterial experience among the poor of the East End of London; but he was urged to continue his reminiscences, and as there remained plenty to tell he complied with the request, and has, evidently without difficulty, filled two-thirds of the partly volume with recollections not less bright, odd, and enterprising than those which gave so much character to his former memoirs. There are not indeed so many long accounts of great cases here, but even such matters are sufficiently represented, and there is much amusing anecdote about eccentric or witty or unbalanced members of the bar, which in England has its full proportion of "cranks."

Mr. Williams speaks of one particularly crazy barrister, who was in the habit of filling his barrister's bag with sharp flint stones before going into court. These stones he would then empty out on the table in front of him, and when (as commonly happened) the presiding judge remonstrated against the display of missiles the offender would reply that he had reason to apprehend an assault, and had merely brought the stones for his protection. The poor man brought the world in a conspiracy against him, and finally it became necessary to put him in an asylum. Mr. Williams's great criminal practice did not protect him from the depredations of the class that relied so largely upon his powers of defence. In a former volume he told how he was victimized by a former client; in the present we give the particulars of a robbery committed during his absence at his chambers, upon which occasion a clean sweep was made of a valuable collection of "bijouterie," consisting mainly of presents made to the owner. No clew was ever obtained to this thief in this case, nor was anything recovered. It seems possible that a barrister like Montagu Williams may have been a "persona grata" with the police, inasmuch as he was several times concerned in the prosecution of police officers for perjury. One or two of these cases, here outlined, suggest the sinister possibility of methods of "railroading" old convicts to prison, such as have been heard of in other countries than England, and which point to the danger arising from an abuse of police power.

Mr. Williams was concerned in the prosecution of the notorious Grenville Murray, editor of the felonious sheet called "The Queen's Messenger," which apparently subsisted by systematic blackmail and slander. Its prey was the English aristocracy. Murray, having himself moved familiarly in those circles was in a position to strike below the belt every time, and he came to terror to all who feared public scandals yet he had skeleton in their closets. Lord Carrington, having been libeled by "The Queen's Messenger," took the first opportunity to administer a sound horsewhipping to the putative editor, Grenville Murray. The latter summoned Carrington for assault, and swore that he was not the editor or in any way connected with "The Queen's Messenger." At the police court hearing a few fight took place between the partisans of the complainant and defendant, the friends of Murray trying to get possession by violence of some evidence which was about to be used against him. The proofs of his connection with the scurrilous paper were so abundant and conclusive that he dared not stay to face the charge of perjury against him, but left his benefactors in the lurch and fled the country, disappearing then finally, and dying abroad in obscurity and destitution. Mr. Williams appeared also in the famous Overend and Gurney trials, the aftermath of that black Friday which threatened to shake the bottom out of the City of London, and which was duplicated only the other day when the collapse of the great house of Baring spread terror and confusion far and wide. The attempts to fix the criminal responsibility upon the members of the firm of Overend and Gurney failed, and all the proceedings had to be abandoned.

A curious case detailed here is that of a wealthy widow against two American "spirit mediums." The facts as related by Mr. Williams indicate that the victim was what Thackeray would have called a born pigeon; one chosen by destiny to be the easy prey of the first sharper who came along. Nothing could be simpler than the practice of the ingenuous medium. The victim had \$50,000 worth of diamonds and jewelry. They wanted this property, so they told her that her mother's spirit desired her to turn it over to them. The reason alleged was that the magnetism of the jewelry was so strong that if she wore it she would be drawn over into the spirit world before her time. All this she swallowed, and forthwith made over her diamonds to the sharper, who subsequently pursued her to make a deed of gift and other papers testifying to the voluntariness of the transfer. In the same way a wardrobe valued at \$30,000 was obtained by these insatiable sharers, nor did they desist until they had drained their victim dry. Then they departed for the United States, the pigeons accompanying them. According to arrangement they were henceforth to maintain her, she having turned over all her property to them. On arriving in this country, however, they soon began to grow tired of her presence, and the cold treatment she experienced had the effect of opening her eyes. Proceedings were begun after the mediums had refused to surrender the woman's property, and becoming alarmed at this point, they gave up a part of the jewelry. Mr. Williams does not say whether in the end all the property was recovered, but the case was evidently one in which the injured person had done her best to make restitution difficult, by surrendering all her own safeguards and putting every possible weapon in the hands of the enemy.

A highly interesting portion of Mr. Williams's volume is that which relates to his experience on the bench. He has been sitting for several years at Worship Street, which serves an East End population of 600,000, and embodies in its jurisdiction such districts as Whitechapel and Shoreditch, where pauperism, crime and vice flourish rankly. One of the worst evils there, as here, is in the character and condition of the domiciles alone available to the very poor. The tenements of London and New York evidently go upon all fours, and the same difficulties and defects of local government have hitherto operated to hinder reform and to protect the profits of the greedy, soulless landlords who maintain these no-sances. In London, however, the municipality has exercised the right of demolition in many instances. This right is clearly necessary, but employed alone it may do quite as much harm as good; since it produces more crowding than before, and thwarts the expelled tenants of the destroyed rookeries upon other tenements which were previously full. The power to build anew should go with that of demolition, but Mr. Williams holds that only the general government ought to exercise this authority. Indeed he is of opinion that national legislation is demanded for the solution of the great problem of London's misery. The pictures he gives are vivid, but not highly colored, and they sufficiently prove the interest and pressing nature of the evils of which he speaks. His own experience has impressed him with the gravity and urgency of the social questions involved, and much useful suggestion will be found in this volume, which is in all respects interesting and entertaining.

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